

(Mr. Ahmad, Pakistan)

a matter of two to three years. There is, however, no room for complacency since according to a publication of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, there have been reports of the use of chemical and biological weapons in at least 16 different conflicts over the last 10 years. Further potentially dangerous structural changes are taking place in the chemical and allied manufacturing industries, especially in the field of biotechnology, which by facilitating the induction of new chemical and biological weapon concepts might open up the possibility of another destabilizing arms race. The existing international régime against the use of chemical weapons is thus under a mounting threat and it should, therefore, be in the best interest of everyone to strengthen that régime.

While expressing the hope that a chemical-weapons convention could be achieved in two to three years, I am fully aware that the present endeavour began almost 20 years ago. One reason for the slow rate at which the effort has moved forward is to be found in the implications that chemical weapons disarmament has for the industrial, scientific and military interests of States.

Pakistan supports a comprehensive, effective and equitable treaty which should prohibit the development, stockpiling, acquisition, transfer and use of chemical weapons and provide for the total destruction of existing stockpiles, delivery systems and production facilities of chemical weapons. My delegation is particularly gratified that at its 1985 session the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons was able to reach agreement on a simple and straightforward clause on prohibition of use. We have always held that such a clause would in no way erode the effectiveness or the legal status of the 1925 Geneva Protocol which the future Chemical Weapons Convention would indeed serve to complement and strengthen.

The issue of definitions and criteria in the context of a chemical weapons convention is an intricate subject which has been further complicated by the existence of competing national and commercial interests. Because of this we view with hopeful anticipation the possibility of an agreement that seems to be emerging as a result of the discussions held in the framework of Working Group A of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons. An agreed set of criteria from which various definitions flow and on the basis of which lethal chemicals are categorized would constitute a foundation-stone for the convention. The integrated approach to the categorization of chemicals relevant to the chemical-weapons convention initiated last year and further developed during the January mini-session of the Ad Hoc Committee deserves to be earnestly pursued.

Ideally, declarations regarding chemical weapon stockpiles and their production facilities should be made before the convention is opened for signature. An agreement on these lines would, besides enhancing the value of the convention, also serve as a confidence-building measure. If this is not possible, a consensus on the time frame within which declarations are to be made should not be too difficult to reach. The declarations should not only be comprehensive but also verifiable. My delegation finds it difficult to sympathize with the position that detailed declarations would compromise the security interests of the possessor States. Such arguments appear to ignore the concerns of those who have not exercised the option to acquire chemical weapons.

Complete elimination of chemical weapon stockpiles, their production facilities and means of delivery should be a central feature of the convention. We hope the chemical-weapon States will eschew viewing the